

I support media diversity

I am writing to you today to comment on Docket No. 02-277, The Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules. In its goals to promote competition, diversity and localism in today's media market, I strongly believe that the FCC should retain all of the current media ownership rules now in question. These rules serve the public interest by limiting the market power of already huge companies in the broadcast industry.

I do not believe that the studies commissioned by the FCC accurately demonstrate the negative affects media deregulation and consolidation have had on media diversity. While there may be indeed be more sources of media than ever before, the spectrum of views presented have become more limited.

The right to carry on informed debate and discussion of current events is part of the founding philosophy of our nation. Our forefathers believed that democracy was best served by a diverse marketplace of ideas. If the FCC allows our media outlets to merge, our ability to have open, informed discussion with a wide variety of viewpoints will be compromised.

The public interest will best be served by preserving media ownership rules in question in this proceeding.

In addition to the official hearing on this matter in Richmond, VA, I strongly urge the FCC to hold additional hearings elsewhere around the nation to solicit the widest possible participation from the public which will be the most directly affected by the outcomes of these decisions. I think it is important for the FCC to not only consider the points of view of those with a financial interest in this issue, but also those with a social or civic interest.

With the serious impact these rule changes will have on our democracy, it is incumbent on the Commission to take the time to review these issues more thoroughly and allow the American people to have a meaningful say in the process.

Why Ownership Rules Matter

• Impact on democracy - If one company can own a town's local newspaper, TV and radio stations, if national TV networks can merge their news operations, if nothing limits the size of these huge corporations, we will get a more limited view on the news. Issues that matter can be more easily buried or distorted, and differing viewpoints will not be heard.

• Diversity of creativity, art, culture, vision - We don't need censorship to combat violent, sexist, racist, commercialized, unoriginal media—we need access for independent producers to offer alternatives. We need choices—not more channels from the same owners.

• Labor rights and minority ownership - Fewer media companies means fewer jobs for media workers. Media ownership by people of color and women is down and getting worse as a result of consolidation.

• Freedom of the 'Net - If the media giants have their way, even the Internet will be controlled by monopolies who can limit how we access the Internet, as well as monitor and charge us for everything we view.

• Localism and community - Without local owners and local newsrooms, media are disconnected from communities. Clear Channel radio uses digital tricks to make the same DJ sound local in dozens of different cities. The bigger these companies get, the less likely they are to cover local issues or

feature local artists.

• Corporate accountability - With the recent wave of corporate malfeasance (especially in the media sector) we need watchdogs now more than ever—not media run by corporate honchos concerned only about their stock price.

• The Fate of Journalism - Ownership consolidation means fewer foreign news bureaus, investigative reporters and resources for journalists. Mega-media's main goal is profit, which undermines any sense of public or civic duty.

Thank you,

Nancy Brown, Jackson, NY